1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

on to the doors of your house. Your wife will then love you again and will come back to you.

Often but little notice is taken of these affairs. Occasionally an injured husband will claim from his wife's lover a string of ceremonial currency or a pig, or he may take the opportunity to divorce his wife, but usually only if he wishes to do so on other grounds. More often nothing is done about it, unless the woman becomes pregnant.

There are a number of plants (see pp. 134–8) believed to possess contraceptive properties, which are generally known and widely used by the women in their intrigues. Whatever the reason, it is certain that these affairs are followed by pregnancy less often than might be expected. When conception does occur, the matter begins to be taken seriously. Sometimes the woman will pretend that the child is her husband's, and this will be tacitly accepted, even though other people besides the couple and the woman's husband know it to be false. This I have on hearsay evidence only. In other cases—this also I have only through informants, but from more than one, and these reasonably reliable—attempts are made to produce an abortion in order to avoid discovery. One account given to me runs as follows: 'If a woman has been with her lover in the bush and finds she is pregnant, she says to him: "My blood is not flowing, I think I am going to have a child, I have had no flow for one moon." They are ashamed, and talk about it for a long time. Then the man gets the leaves of the *karēb* plant (a tough creeper, of the *Rutaceae* order, whose stems are used for making string), and chews them with lime, and rubs the mixture on the women's abdomen. She swallows some of it, and it causes the flow to begin again. Then the man says to all the people who laughed at the woman because they thought she was pregnant: "Look, she is menstruating, she is not pregnant".' It may be that the massaging of the abdomen is sufficiently violent to produce the desired effect, without presupposing any actual result of chewing the *karēb* leaves. They say that a woman will never bring about an abortion in the case of a child by her own husband, however many she may have. But they do it for the children of their lovers, because if a woman has a child by a man other than her husband she is ashamed. Cases have occurred in the past of women pregnant by their lovers committing suicide by jumping from the top of a tree.

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862 the child at weaning. No instance of a child being forbidden the breast on account of a second pregnancy came under my personal observation, and I have no details as to its effect on the child, either physiologically or psychologically.

TWINS

845 Twins (*pūna*) are much disliked. The only reason I could elicit for this was that the mother could not look after them both properly, and that she did not like to hear them cry. Where no cradle is used, and the baby is the constant companion of its mother no matter what her occupation, it is easy to understand that two babies are altogether beyond her power to cope with. No one would admit [847] that such infants were actually killed or abandoned, but there was general agreement that the mother simply neglected to give one or both of them proper attention, with the result that both died, or the more vigorous of the two might survive and be cared for as usual. The fate of the twins rests entirely with the mother.

No twin birth occurred in any of the villages under my observation during my stay. One of the Kurtatchi women had borne twins, both female, some years before by a former husband now dead. Both children died during lactation, and rumour had it that she had deliberately neglected them. Of a pair of twins born to a couple in the neighbouring village of Ruri, one, a male, is now adult, the other, a female, died in early childhood from a septic sore.

Two explanations of the cause of twins were given to me, from different villages, both from reliable informants. One was that the woman had eaten some 'double' fruit, such as twin bananas or areca-nuts. The other alleged cause was that the woman's husband, in ignorance of the fact that she was pregnant, or simply out of carelessness, had, while cohabiting with her, pressed too heavily on her abdomen, thus causing the blood that was making the child to divide into two streams, one going to the right side and the other to the left, resulting in the formation of two children instead of one.

Mr. Gordon Thomas brought to my notice a case of twins born on the island of Pororan, which was explained by the fact that the husband had had intercourse with his wife after having attended a bush feast. Both babies died. He told me also that he knew of the following deformities: a double-headed child, one child with

Birth and Children

In Buka and north Bougainville, as far as I could ascertain, there are no special ceremonies when a child is born. In south Bougainville a great feast (called marromarro) is prepared during pregnancy by the women of the community whereby numerous dishes play an important rôle. This feast is celebrated outside of the village; the husbands are not allowed to be present, but the women are kind enough to send them an abundant portion of the delicacies they serve; cuscus (a phalanger) roast is especially preferred on these occasions. If a son is born to a chieftain, this is the occasion for special celebrations. Neither the infant nor the mother is permitted to leave the hut until the child is 1 1/2 to 2 years old. Then great amounts of food are prepared, and on a certain day a great feast takes place accompanied by dancing and singing. On this occasion the son and mother come out into the light of day and are admired and marveled at. In Buka and north Bougainville a similar ceremony takes place, but only when the boy is 7 to 8 years old. He is not kept inside until the time of this festivity, but can move about as he pleases within and outside the hut. The feast consists of a colossal meal, and a special dance (called hesimna) is connected with it. Also a special song is rendered by the dancers that begins with the words: lili a manu etc. (for the song as well as the music cf. the relevant chapter). The singers and dancers form a broad circle, and each one holds in his hand an approximately 1 1/2 meter long bamboo cane, the lower end of which is closed by one of the natural segments of the reed. In tempo with the melody they move in a circle and at the same time strike the bamboo cane (called zekull) on the ground, producing a hollow roaring sound.

Infanticide and abortion -- horrible practices that are still quite widespread even today on the Solomon Islands situated farther to the southeast -- do not occur here so extensively. [9] A proof of this is the great number of children that one encounters everywhere in the villages in Buka and Bougainville. When more peaceful conditions finally come about, this population will surely increase rapidly. As the situation stands today, the numerous feuds and, connected with them, the unstable life in the open, are not factors that contribute to population increase.